

**Amendments to the Claims:** This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application

Listing of Claims:

1                    1.        (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a solid polymer electrolyte  
2 membrane comprising an ion-conducting polymer, a catalyst and a high surface area supported  
3 material, which process comprises:

4                    (a)       associating the catalyst with the support material to form a catalysed  
5 support; and

6                    (b)       combining the catalysed support with ~~the ion-conducting polymer, a~~  
7 solution of the ion-conducting polymer to produce a membrane such that  
8 the catalysed support is incorporated into the solid polymer electrolyte  
9 membrane, wherein the ion-conducting polymer is in a liquid medium that  
10 is aqueous-based and is essentially free from organic solvents.

1                    2.        (Cancelled)

1                    3.        (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein the  
2 catalyst comprises one or more precious metals, or combinations thereof, and/or other  
3 transition group metals.

1                    4.        (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein the  
2 catalyst comprises platinum.

1                    5.        (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein the  
2 catalyst is deposited onto the support material to a loading of between 0.01 to 50.0% by weight  
3 of the total catalysed support.

1                   6.       (Original) A process according to claim 5, wherein the catalyst is  
2 deposited onto the support material at a loading of from 1 to 25 wt% of the total catalysed  
3 support.

1                   7.       (Original) A process according to claim 6, wherein the catalyst is  
2 deposited onto the support material at a loading of from 1 to 10 wt% of the total catalysed  
3 support.

1                   8.       (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein the  
2 amount of catalysed support incorporated into the membrane is such that the metal loading is  
3 lower than 0.1mg/cm<sup>2</sup>.

1                   9.       (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 8, wherein the  
2 amount of catalysed support incorporated into the membrane is such that the metal loading is  
3 lower than 0.05mg/cm<sup>2</sup>.

1                   10.      (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 9, wherein the  
2 amount of catalysed support incorporated into the membrane is such that the metal loading is  
3 lower than 0.03mg/cm<sup>2</sup>.

1                   11.      (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein the high  
2 surface support material is non-electrically conducting.

1                   12.      (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein the high  
2 surface area support material is selected from the group consisting of silica, titania, alumina,  
3 zirconium oxides, zirconium silicates, tungsten oxides, tin oxides and zeolites.


1                   13.      (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein the  
2 support material is in the form of fibres.

1                   14.      (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein the  
2 support material is in the form of particles with a mean particle size in the range of from  
3 0.001µm to 10µm.

1                   15.   (Original) A process according go claim 14, wherein the mean particle  
2 size is in the range of from 0.01 $\mu$ m to 5 $\mu$ m.

1                   16.   (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein the ion-  
2 conducting polymer comprises an essentially aqueous solution of a perfluorinated co-polymer  
3 with ion-exchange groups.

1                   17.   (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein the  
2 catalysed support is in particle or fibre form and step (b) comprises directly adding the  
3 catalysed support to a solution of the ion-conducting polymer electrolyte.

 1                   18.   (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein the  
2 catalysed support is in particle form and is applied as a binder to form a fibre network to which  
3 the ion-conducting polymer is subsequently applied to produce the membrane.

1                   19.   (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein the  
2 catalysed support is in fibre form and itself is formed into a fibre network which is thereafter  
3 bound with a binder, and the ion-conducting polymer is subsequently applied to produce the  
4 membrane.

1                   20.   (Previously Presented) A membrane prepared by a process according to  
2 claim 1.

1                   21.   (Previously Presented) A membrane electrode assembly comprising a  
2 membrane prepared by a process according to claim 1.

1                   22.   (Previously Presented) A fuel cell comprising a membrane prepared by a  
2 process according to claim 1.

1                   23.   (Original) A fuel cell comprising a membrane electrode assembly  
2 according to claim 21.

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3  
24. (New) A process according to claim 1 further comprising directly casting  
the membrane from the mixture of the catalysed support and the solution of the ion-  
conducting polymer of step (b).

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